

TRUE BLUE

STREET & SMITH,
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ADVENTURES OF
OUR BOYS IN BLUE

CLIF FARADAY AT CARDENAS

OR,
HOT SHOT WHERE IT DID MOST GOOD



BY

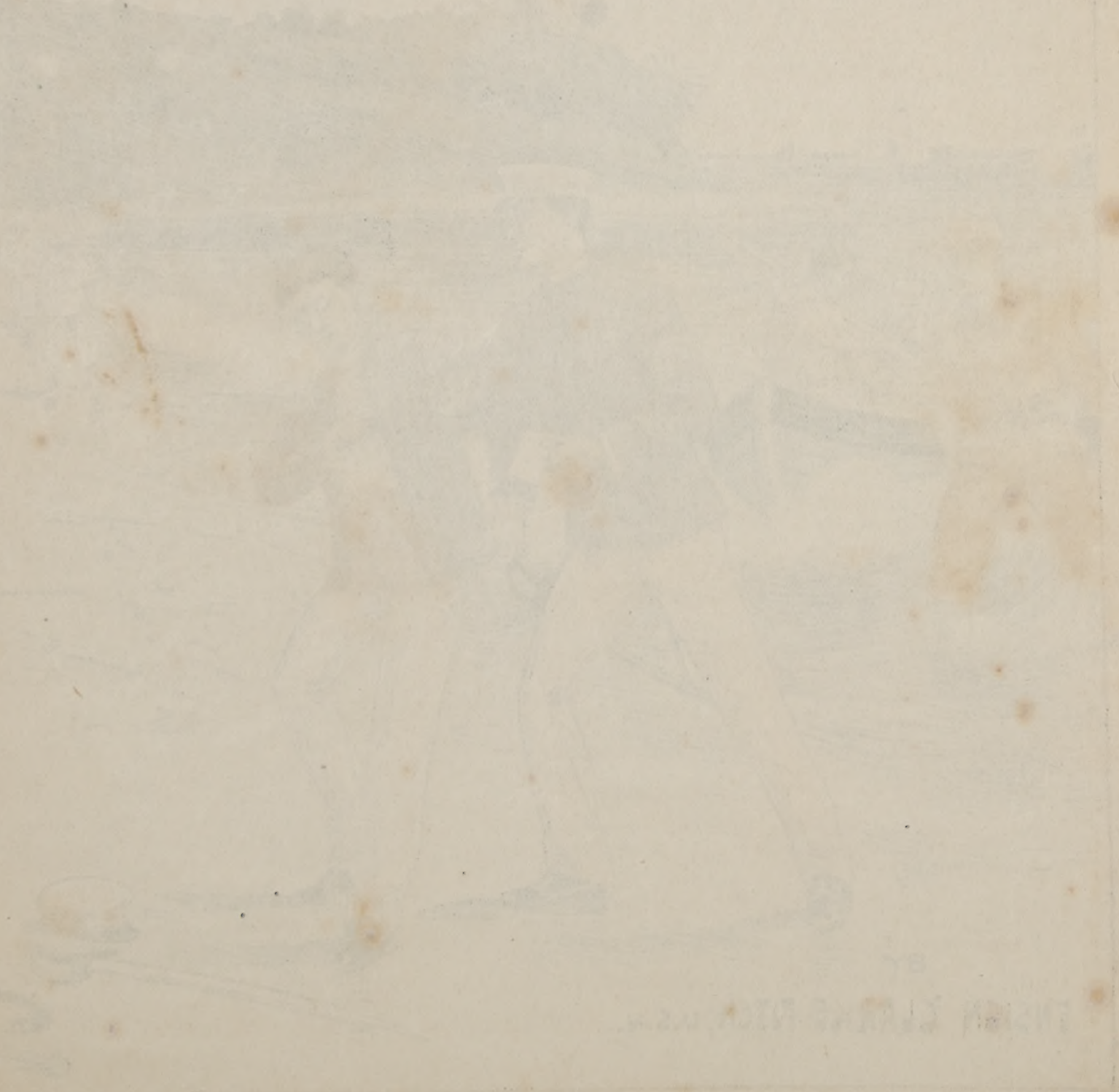
ENSIGN CLARKE FITCH, U.S.N.

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ADVENTURE

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OR NOT? WHERE IT DID NOT GO



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TRUE BLUE.

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Clif Faraday at Cardenas

OR,

HOT SHOT WHERE IT DID MOST GOOD.

BY ENSIGN CLARKE FITCH, U. S. N.

CHAPTER I.

AN IMPORTANT MISSION.

It was early morning with the blockading squadron off Havana, and there was unusual activity among the American warships.

The sun had scarcely shown above the horizon before signals from the New York had summoned the commanders of several of the vessels on board the flagship. A short conference had been held there, and now two of the vessels, the officers having returned, were steaming away to the eastward, saluting the others as they passed them.

The errand upon which those two ships were bent was plainly evident to all those who watched them; for one of them carried a curious arrangement of grappling irons in the bow. There was no one who saw them that did not envy those on board of the lucky vessel.

One was a small cruiser, the Nashville. The other was even smaller, but

we are especially interested in her. It was the gunboat Uncas of which Naval Cadet Clif Faraday was the junior officer.

Clif was on board then, a tall, handsome lad with curly brown hair; he was standing in the stern shading his eyes and gazing in the direction of the receding flagship.

He saw Bessie Stuart standing on the quarter-deck of the big cruiser and watching the Uncas steam away. Clif had said good-by to her, for he did not expect to see her again; Rear Admiral Sampson had promised to send her to Key West that afternoon.

In the excitement of what was before him the cadet was very soon obliged to forget his friend; as the last vessel in the long line of the blockading fleet swept astern of the Uncas, Clif turned and went forward to join Lieutenant Raymond, the vessel's commander.

The lieutenant had been watching the preparations on board of the Nashville,

"The Starry Flag" Stories are Written by a Famous Military Writer.

which was a short ways ahead of them. He lowered his glass as the cadet approached.

"You will have all the excitement you want to-day, Mr. Faraday," he remarked, pleasantly.

Clif did not as yet know where they were bound, for the officer had returned from the flagship but a short while ago, and had not had time to communicate the news.

So Clif looked at him inquisitively as he said that.

"I see the Nashville is fitted out for cable cutting," he said. "But I do not know where."

"It is Cardenas," answered the other.

Clif started as he heard that abrupt announcement. A look of delight swept over his face. For he knew that the lieutenant had named a well-fortified harbor, and that if there was any cable cutting to be done there there was indeed a prospect of excitement.

Destroying the Spanish means of communication was the latest diversion discovered by Uncle Sam's sailors. It was a far more interesting occupation than lying around all day off Havana sleepily eyeing the forts. But yesterday two of the smaller vessels had come in badly battered up with an exciting tale of a lively encounter with the batteries of Cienfuegos, and since then every one had been anxiously wondering who would be next.

The cutting of cables having once begun, everybody knew that it must be the intention of the Government to isolate Cuba completely, and if that was the case

there was plenty of work cut out for the gunboats.

Clif could hardly keep still for joy when he learned suddenly that morning that he was on one of the lucky vessels. But he was sure of it when he saw the Uncas set out to follow the Nashville, which had arrived from Key West the previous night after having been rigged out with a set of grappling irons with which to drag for the submerged cables.

And when Clif heard Cardenas he almost shouted for joy. Lieutenant Raymond noticed his look of delight and smiled.

"They have three heavy batteries there," he said. "You can improve your target practice on them. There will be plenty of time, for we mean business."

Clif saw the quiet, firm look in the officer's eyes as he said that, and knew that he meant it. Lieutenant Raymond was a man of few words, but he was always ready when the time came for action.

And as he turned away to see that everything on the little gunboat was ready for the morning's work, Clif felt sure that before that morning had passed the Uncas would be inside of the harbor of Cardenas in spite of possible mines and torpedoes, dodging around to protect the small boats of the Nashville while they performed their hazardous duty.

And that was a prospect that made Clif Faraday's blood leap; the cool morning breeze that played around the vessel was not more active and lively than he.

The Uncas, which was a converted steel tug, made good time through the

Boys, Even in Fiction, You Can Have More Than One Friend.

sparkling water, and the blockading fleet receded rapidly. She and her companion were about of equal speed, and they had a merry race for a time while the crews worked cheerily away at the task of getting ready for their dangerous work.

Every one knew that it was dangerous; and yet nobody thought much of it, so eager were they for some excitement after the weary watching in front of the beleaguered city. They knew that they were going into a real action this time, though of course none of them could tell that their cable cutting exploit at Cardenas was destined to be one of the most famous incidents of the war.

The two vessels were quite near to the Cuban coast as they hurried along, and since the air was clear and bright they could see everything plainly; twice in the course of their run Spanish batteries hidden in the sand tried a shot or two at them as they steamed past.

But the American vessels went on in sublime indifference. And indeed the aim of the Spanish gunners deserved nothing more.

Meanwhile in preparation for the real business of the day ammunition for the guns was brought up and arms served out to the Uncas' small crew. It was with grim satisfaction that the sailors loaded up their revolvers and buckled their sabres to their belts.

The discipline on the ship was so perfect that it was a very short time indeed before everything was ready. And then came an impatient wait of several hours while the run to Cardenas was made.

"Are we to have any other vessels to

help us?" Clif inquired of Lieutenant Raymond, who was standing in the bow with his glass.

"The Hudson and the Winslow are coming up from the other direction," the officer answered. "And if we can't manage it we're to wait for them. But I hope that won't be necessary."

"How many cables are there?"

"Three, according to reports," the officer responded to that. "But I do not think it will take us very long to find them."

He went on to inform the cadet that a Cuban who had formerly been a pilot in Cardenas bay was now on board of the Nashville, charged with the duty of guiding them in the search of the cables. Lieutenant Raymond had in his pocket a chart of the harbor with the batteries all carefully marked.

One of the advantages Clif had found in being attached to one of the smaller vessels was that he shared in all his superior officer's knowledge of what was before them. On board of the New York Clif knew no more about his captain's plans than the lowest stoker in the hold; but on the Uncas he was obliged to act as officer of the deck half the time and so whatever information Lieutenant Raymond might have he always shared with the cadet.

And so he spread out the hastily sketched diagram, the ink of which was still fresh from the Cuban's pen; the size of the enemies' guns were all noted down and so Clif had a chance to see just what he would have to face.

The prospect was one that would have

Hal Maynard Appears Only in "The Starry Flag."

made some people feel uncomfortable; but Clif only muttered, "The more the merrier." The size of the guns was not of much importance, for the possibility of their projectiles hitting anything but water was not considered.

"Are there any mines?" Clif asked.

"None in the entrance to the outer bay," answered the other, "and that is as far as we have to go."

"That is one thing to be thankful for at any rate," said Clif. "I can shoot at the batteries with more peace of mind for that."

He studied the paper carefully, and noticed a mark in red ink on shore close to the water's edge.

"What is that?" he asked.

"Some sort of a signal station," said the lieutenant. "It is some sort of a wooden tower, I believe, with a telegraph outfit and so on. The cables land near there too, I think."

"And what are we to do with it?"

"The orders are to smash it with a few shots. But we will attend to the batteries first."

"Why not land and capture it?" Clif asked eagerly.

The officer smiled at his wild suggestion.

"I am afraid it would take an army to do that," he said. "We are safer on board of our ship."

Clif felt like remarking that they had not come for their health, but he thought he had better not; still he tucked that landing project away in a corner of his mind for future use.

And as it happened it proved of very much use indeed.

Clif had plenty of time to study the chart and get everything fixed in his mind. By the time the Uncas and the Nashville (which she managed to leave a short distance behind her) had begun to near their destination he knew the harbor almost as well as if it were before him.

"The first thing we ought to see," he muttered, half to himself, "is that long cape——"

"And there it is now," said the lieutenant, who overheard him.

He pointed ahead, and in toward shore. Clif studied the spot carefully with the glass and was able to make out a little hut which was marked as being near the shore.

And after that it was a very short while indeed before the two vessels were at the scene of excitement.

The plan as arranged was to waste no time in loitering near the entrance of the outer bay, but to steam right in and get to work.

"We may be half through before the batteries wake up," said the lieutenant.

And so, hugging the shore as closely as they dared, and keeping out of sight, the two vessels rapidly approached the entrance to Cardenas harbor.

Everything on the Uncas was on the qui vive, men straining their eyes and clinching their fists excitedly. For it was time then for the fun to begin, and in a hurry. When it once began, everybody knew it was likely to last for some time.

There was no sign that the enemy had sighted the approaching vessels. They

DON'T FAIL TO READ "THE STARRY FLAG."

rounded the little cape without firing a shot or being fired at.

And then Cardenas bay lay straight in front of them, town, mountains, batteries and signal station, all just as mapped.

Clif and the lieutenant both took it in at a glance; and then suddenly the latter gave vent to a muttered exclamation.

Just as the Uncas glided into view around the cape to the alarm and consternation of every one in the bay, a rowboat which had been out in the middle turned and started for the shore.

And Lieutenant Raymond's exclamation was caused by his noticing that it was manned by Spanish sailors; they had turned to run away the instant they saw the gunboat.

Its occupants at that distance could be plainly seen; Clif glanced at them and saw four men at the oars, and an officer seated in the stern. There was one other occupant in the bow, a man in civilian's clothes, and with a white bandage tied about his head. Being in the bow his face was toward Clif; and as he glanced at the man the lad started backward in amazement.

Lieutenant Raymond noticed it; for at that instant the Spanish batteries opened fire on the Uncas and the officer turned to see why Clif, who was in charge of the bow gun, did not reply.

"What's the matter?" he cried.

By way of answer the cadet sprang toward him.

"Lend me the glass," he cried, anxiously. "Just a moment!"

He took one glance at the occupants of

that rowboat, which was bounding away at the top of its speed.

The one glance was enough; with a shout of warning, Clif leaped toward the gun.

"It's Ignacio!" he cried. "Ignacio, the spy who tried to stab Admiral Sampson!"

CHAPTER II.

IGNACIO'S CLOSE SHAVE.

The effect of Clif's startling announcement was that the cable cutting plans were almost forgotten in an instant. It had been Lieutenant Raymond's intention to save precious time by steaming straight in, to the place where the cables were to be dragged for; but when he heard Clif's shout and realized what it meant, he gave a quick order to the man at the wheel, and the tug swung round like a flash.

She started over in the direction of that rowboat; the spy Ignacio was a more valuable prize than any cable.

Those in the little rowboat were in a dangerous position just then; they were near the shore, it was true, but also they were near the Uncas; and Ignacio must have seen that he had been recognized.

For the sailors redoubled their desperate efforts, and the officer half rose in his seat to urge them on.

The next few moments were exciting ones for all parties concerned. As the Americans had expected, the batteries got to work the instant the warships were sighted; and the roar of the firing after that was almost continuous.

The aim was bad enough at first. But the shot and shell soon whistled past the

CLIF FARADAY IS BRAVE. SO IS HAL MAYNARD.

Uncas on every side. Nobody heeded it, however.

As for Clif, he was blind and deaf to everything, except one thing. He felt that twenty cables were not as important to him as the capturing of the villainous spy.

The bow gun of the Uncas was loaded and the sailors standing by impatiently waiting for the cadet to aim it. He lost not a second after his warning cry, but sprang toward it eagerly.

If ever hatred nerved Clif's arm it did so then. Hatred he certainly felt toward Ignacio, and it was the kind of hatred that is a virtue.

There rose up before his mind as he knelt behind that gun a picture of what had taken place the last time he had seen that Spaniard. It was a picture that made Clif shudder.

He saw himself buried in one of the horrible underground dungeons of Morro Castle, alone and at the mercy of that fiendish Ignacio, and Clif's blood never failed to run cold as he thought of the tortures he would have had to undergo, had he not been saved, by the merest accident, from the hands of his infuriated enemy.

Clif had left the man lying on that dungeon floor apparently killed by a blow which had been dealt him on the head. That statement is sufficient to explain the presence of the white bandage on Ignacio's head.

Clif was boiling over with excitement at that moment, but his hand was calm and steady. He swung the gun round until he had it full upon the flying rowboat.

There was not much time to spare for the boat was nearing the shore; there would not be an opportunity for many shots. And so there was all the more need that the first shot should be straight.

Already the water about the boat had begun to be tore up by the shot. The Nashville was also training her rapid-firing guns upon it. That, however, Clif scarcely noticed; he meant to rely on his own shot and no one's else.

And so when he sprang back and pulled the firing trigger of the gun his heart almost stopped beating while he waited during the instant that followed.

And then he gave one cry of delight, a cry that was echoed by the Uncas crew into a cheer of victory.

"Well done!" shouted Lieutenant Raymond.

The shot had struck the frail rowboat full in the centre and had shivered it to fragments. When the puff of smoke blew past the occupants of the boat were seen to be floundering in the water.

"We've got them now!" laughed Clif, gleefully.

But he was mistaken, and he saw it to his consternation a moment later.

"It's a shoal!" he gasped.

For the Spaniards were in water not two feet deep, and they were making a wild dash for the shore splashing along with all their might!

At the same instant both Clif and the lieutenant jerked out their revolvers. In response to the latter's quick command half a dozen of the sailors did likewise, and a perfect hail of bullets rattled about the Spaniards.

HURRAH FOR "THE STARRY FLAG."

The range had been close for the big gun, but it was rather long for a revolver. Still, during the few seconds it took the fugitives to reach the land two of them were dropped by the bullets.

But Clif gritted his teeth angrily, as he saw that the one person they were most anxious to hit was apparently uninjured. Ignacio's white; bandaged head bobbed on. And a moment later he reached the land.

He sprang out of the water and dashed wildy away; it was but a second or two more before he was lost to sight in the bushes. And Clif flung his revolver to the deck in disgust.

Lieutenant Raymond was almost as angry as the cadet, for he knew all about Ignacio, and he knew that the Americans had no more treacherous and cunning enemy than that Spanish spy.

But in the situation they were they had no time to waste in regrets.

For they were under fire from the heavy Cardenas batteries; at that very instant there was a crash, and the first shot that hit them tore a great hole through the gunboat's funnel.

That called back her crew to the main business of the day. Lieutenant Raymond turned sharply away from the chase of Ignacio, and Clif, too, almost forgot it in the excitement that followed.

During the brief incident narrated above the Nashville had been heading straight on into the bay, and so had gotten the start of the Uncas; but the gallant little tug set out after her, while the shore guns blazed away at both of them.

Fairly good their aim was, too; they

made the Americans' position a far from comfortable one. But nobody flinched or thought of stopping. They had come in to drag for the cable, and the quicker they did it the better.

Clif found opportunity to drown his sorrow at Ignacio's escape in replying to the fire of the Spanish batteries. He was soon completely engrossed in the new work.

He had the bow gun all to himself, to do what he pleased with.

Shot and shell tore past him, but he did not heed it. Clif was used to that by this time, and the hum of bullets was music to his ears.

He chose the nearest of the shore batteries, growing nearer every instant.

He could not see very fairly because they were hidden by smoke but he got the range correct and then with two of the sailors to help him load and fire he kept blazing away just as fast as he could work the gun.

And at that task he kept steadily, neither looking to right or left, for the next five or ten exciting minutes of that engagement.

Meanwhile, calmly, as if no such thing as a Spaniard ever was or would be, the Nashville's boats had been gotten away and were setting to work at their dangerous task. Batteries might churn up the water around them, but still the cables had to be cut.

The charts of the Cuban pilot had proved to be very accurate; they proved to be accurate in the case of the cables, too, which was fortunate, considering the haste in which the work had to be done.

The Nashville had steamed boldly in

HAL MAYNARD IS CROWNED WITH LAURELS.

until she was within half a mile of the batteries. The little Uncas was even bolder, and Clif soon had a very close target indeed to shoot at.

He made the most of his chance, as also did the gunboat, which swung round and opened broadside on the batteries. The little vessel was soon hidden in a cloud of smoke.

In the meanwhile, Lieutenant Raymond, cool as a lump of ice, was strolling up and down the deck, smiling as the shells sang past him, and studying the scene with his glass whenever he got a chance.

There were many things to interest him—the effect of his own vessel's firing, the success of the Nashville's boats, the damage done by the Spanish shots, the possible arrival of the other vessels or of Spanish troops on the shore. All these as the commander of the vessel he had to watch out for.

And as it afterward proved it was well that there was somebody to do so, for it was not very long before the lieutenant made a discovery which was destined to prove a very important one indeed, in fact, to make all the difference between success and failure in that cable cutting expedition.

For perhaps five minutes the combat went on just as it was, the Uncas being struck by several shots but having no one injured. What damage was done to the Spanish no one could say, because of the smoke.

But Clif was soon doing his very best to make it considerable. He had flung off his coat, for it was hot work on the steel deck and behind that blazing gun. Fired twenty or thirty times a minute it soon got red hot, so that it gave off great clouds of hissing steam when one of the sailors set to work dashing buckets of water over it.

And yet red hot or dripping wet made no difference to Clif, who was dripping himself with perspiration, and red hot with excitement. His fire never slackened for an instant of the time.

So engrossed was he in his task that he did not notice anything of what was going on about him.

Lieutenant Raymond had been carefully scanning the shore, and suddenly he made a startled exclamation. Then, just as suddenly, he turned and called to Clif.

"Cadet Faraday," he cried, "come here please."

But Clif did not hear a word of it. The first warning he had was when he felt some one touch him on the shoulder.

He faced about and saw that it was the lieutenant.

"Let the sailors manage that gun a moment," said the officer. "Come back here out of the smoke."

Clif was reluctant to leave the gun; but as he glanced at the officer he saw an excited look on his face. And so he followed him quickly.

The lieutenant stepped toward the stern where the smoke of the battle was not so heavy, and he put the glass into Clif's hand and pointed toward the shore.

"Look at those men," he cried.

Clif saw with the naked eye three or four men hurrying across a cleared space off to one side.

The spot was just a little to one side of the signal station before alluded to.

Who the Spaniards were Clif had no idea; but when he glanced at them with the powerful binoculars he saw, and started back with a cry.

For the foremost of the men wore civilian's clothing, and had his head tied in a white bandage.

"It's Ignacio!" exclaimed the cadet.

And Ignacio it was, for a fact. The fellow had made his way through the bushes

Spain in the Eagle's Claws is Our "Now Will You Be Good" Button—See Page 32.

along with the other survivors of the row-boat. The signal station was about a quarter of a mile further inside of the bay than the spot where they had landed.

Clif raised the glasses again to watch the three; he was just in time to see them disappear in the building. And though he watched carefully, he failed to see them come out.

Amid the din and excitement of that scene one had to think quickly; Clif did it. If anything was to be made of that discovery it must be done at once.

"We'll drop some shells into the place," muttered the lieutenant.

But Clif had a better plan than that; he had that one tucked away in a corner of his mind and now it occurred to him like an inspiration.

He took one swift glance along the silent shore; he saw no one near that signal station, and it was then that the wild plan occurred to him.

He whirled about and faced the lieutenant, his eyes dancing.

"I know what to do, sir!" he cried.

It was not his place to make suggestions, but in the excitement neither he nor the officer thought of that.

"What is it?" cried the other.

"As I said—land and capture them, and the station, too!"

Lieutenant Raymond started back as that bold suggestion was made, but he saw the plan was worth considering. Ignacio was a valuable prize.

"But they'll run away before we can get there," he muttered.

"Don't let them see us," was the cadet's response. "Land outside behind the cape; we can head them off in back."

As was the quiet lieutenant's custom he stood for at least a minute thinking over that suggestion and weighing the chances. He raised his glass, and carefully studied

the shore once more, and the signal tower where Ignacio had disappeared.

Then, while Clif watched him anxiously, breathlessly, knowing how much hung on the decision, he turned and took one more glance at the batteries up the bay which were making it so unpleasant for the Uncas just then.

Finally, as he made up his mind, he turned and looked at Clif.

"Mr. Faraday," he said, "the command of the party would fall to you. I dare not leave the vessel."

"I am willing," said Clif.

"It is a very dangerous venture."

"I know it, sir," was the calm response.

"And you may be cut off; you may not get back, for I cannot spare many men."

"Half a dozen will do."

"And you wish to take the risk?"

"I do."

"Very well, then. We will try it."

And a moment later the lieutenant's clear voice rang through the vessel.

"Cease firing! Port the helm!"

CHAPTER III.

A DARING VENTURE.

None of the men on the Uncas had any idea what that order meant, but the lieutenant did not think it necessary to explain. As the firing ceased he signaled for half speed and stepped to the pilot house to direct the quartermaster at the wheel.

The little gunboat steamed over toward the Nashville, and passed close to her stern. As she did so Lieutenant Raymond shouted to the commander of the other vessel for permission to land a party and attempt Ignacio's capture. The commander of the Nashville was the lieutenant's

THE "STARRY FLAG" AND "TRUE BLUE" ARE CHUMS

senior, and therefore in command of the expedition.

The work of cutting the cables was half accomplished by that time, and so the permission was promptly granted; a moment afterward the *Uncas* signals rang for full speed, and she turned tail and ran swiftly out of the battle.

The lieutenant could hear the Spaniards cheering at that; and he smiled sarcastically.

"They will probably send word of their glorious victory," he said, "that is, if they can manage it before the cables go."

But the Americans did not mind that. The crew had heard the lieutenant's cry, and they knew that it was not cowardice which prompted his leaving.

The gunboat steamed at full speed out toward the open sea again; no preparations were made for the landing party, for it was more than likely that Ignacio was watching them from the signal station.

The only thing that was done was to call for volunteers. The officer explained in a few words what it was proposed to do, while the eager men, still standing at quarters, listened attentively.

"You may come back," he said, briefly, "and you may not. Who will go?"

He knew before he asked the question what the answer would be; every man stepped forward at the word.

There were about a dozen sailors on the little tug. Half of them could be spared, and since it was Clif's command, the lieutenant turned to him and told him to select whom he would.

Clif picked out the men who had been with him before, and who knew him. Then silently they returned to their places to wait until the vessel should be out of sight from the harbor.

That was a very few moments, but

they were aggravatingly long ones to Clif and also to the lieutenant, who was anxious to get back into the fight they were leaving behind them.

It was a pretty sight to see the Nashville at a distance, clouded in smoke and banging away at the shore forts; but nobody on the *Uncas* took time to notice it.

The gunboat reached the open, and turning as quickly as she dared, ran down the shore in the shallow water behind the cape. It was only a few seconds more before the battle, and the harbor too were no longer to be seen.

Before them ran the shore, sparsely wooded and desolate, no one in sight. Without a word Lieutenant Raymond signaled to reverse engines.

And as he nodded to Clif the lad gave the order that sent the lucky half a dozen sailors toward the small boat at a bound. In an almost incredibly short space of time the boat was in the water and the eager men tumbling into it.

They were in a hurry—nor did they have to wait for Clif. He was in his seat with the first of them—and then came the order to cast off and pull away.

Like a shot from a cannon the little boat bounded over the waves in the direction of the shore; the *Uncas* turned slowly and soon disappeared around the cape again.

But quick as she was the crew of the small boat were quicker. Before they were lost to sight the lieutenant had the satisfaction of seeing them race in on top of a great breaker that swept them on to the sandy beach.

Clif's sharp eyes had been scanning the shore in the meantime. He held his revolver in his hand, ready in case he should see any signs of a lurking foe.

But apparently there was no one in the neighborhood. The men rowed in, at any rate, without being interfered with.

ASK FOR "THE STARRY FLAG."

As the boat bounded in on the wave and reached the shore the men leaped out and seized it, bearing it on with the impetus it had gained. They ran it high up on the beach safe from the waves, and then jerking out their revolvers and cutlasses they fell in behind Clif and started on a trot across the country.

For Clif had hesitated only for a moment while he got his bearings, and then silently and swiftly he set out on the short journey.

It was "bush country," through which they were going; and though traveling was hard, the sailors found it easy to keep hidden, which squared the account. They gritted their teeth and clutched their weapons eagerly.

For surely this was a bold effort, if ever there was one. Seven men setting out in a country full of their enemies to capture a prisoner from the rear, and not knowing but that they might meet an army in the meantime.

It was true that the ships were near; the noise of the firing was loud as ever. But the ships could not aid them until the most dangerous part of the adventure was over.

So they had none to rely on but themselves, and their own bravery. They meant to die fighting, no matter how strong a force they might meet.

The excitement and the difficulty of traveling made the sortie seem much longer than it really was. But Clif had the sound of the firing for a guide, and pressed on resolutely.

No Indian could have scanned the woods in front with more sharp attention than he did; but no one was seen. The gallant little band struggled on without interruption of any sort until they knew that they must be nearly opposite the signal station.

There was need for double caution then.

Clif turned in the direction of the bay and slowed into a walk, peering ahead through the trees and bushes.

He had his revolver cocked, ready for the first of the enemy he caught a glimpse of. But as it chanced the first warning he got of the fact that he was nearing his destination came in another way.

He caught a gleam of yellow through the trees, and with one step more he could see that it was the Spanish flag floating from the staff on the top of the signal tower.

The men stopped involuntarily for a moment. Then, as Clif started forward again, they pressed close behind him to follow.

The signal station was very near them then. It was a small wooden building fronting the bay; the second story was a scaffolding, reached by a ladder, and had something of the appearance of a "tower" as we have called it. The Spanish flag was waving defiantly from the top.

That much was seen by the Americans in one instant for that was all they delayed. That Spanish flag was like a red and yellow rag to a bull. Clif waved his sword to the men and leaped forward.

"Charge!" he shouted.

And with a ringing cheer, the gallant sailors bounded out of the thicket and across the little clearing toward the object of their attack.

Just as they had expected they saw the startled faces of their enemies in the doorway. Clif swung up his revolver and his shot was followed by a rattling volley from the men at his back.

The Spaniards made an effort to reply, but the charge of the "Yankee pigs" had been so sudden that it took them aback. They ran into the building and a moment later Clif, with the eager tars behind him, burst impetuously through the doorway.

All Boys Who Love Their Country Read "The Starry Flag."

CHAPTER IV.

RAISING THE FLAG.

There was no resistance made to the wild charge of the Americans. There were only three or four of the Spaniards, and they must have thought from the shouts and firing that a whole army was attacking them.

For as Clif rushed in he saw them cowering in a corner of the room, staring at him.

And so he checked the impulse to fire.

"Do you surrender?" he demanded, sternly.

None of them seemed quite calm enough to answer, but there was evidently nothing else for them to do. The sailors crowded in and leveled their revolvers at them.

As for Clif, the moment he saw that they did not mean to fight, he sprang toward them excitedly. There was but one thought in his mind—the head with the white bandage.

And he saw that it was not there!

Quick as a flash he turned to the men.

"Two of you keep watch outside!" he roared. "Quick! Shoot that fellow if you see him!"

A moment later Clif fancied that he heard a sound above him there was a ladder leading up through a trap door in the roof to the platform above.

And Clif bounded toward it. He had no thought of the possible danger, no thought of anything else just then. He was wild, with but one idea in his mind, that fiend, Ignacio, must be caught!

And gripping his revolver in one hand Clif leaped up the ladder. It took him but a moment to reach the hatchway opening.

If Ignacio had been there he could have shot his old enemy or cloven his head with a sword; for as Clif clambered up he was helpless.

But he struggled to his feet and gazed about him unmolested. There was still no sign of the object of his search. The roof of the building was deserted.

Clif gave an impatient exclamation. Had he come all this way for nothing?

There was still above him the platform or top of the scaffolding. It was reached by another ladder; and there was a possibility of the spy having taken refuge there. Again without hesitating Clif sprang toward it.

He felt that he could die content if only he could secure that Spaniard. But the satisfaction was still denied him; for the cunning fellow was nowhere to be seen.

As Clif came out upon the lofty platform he had a glorious view of the bay and the fighting. He could see the Nashville still banging away; he could see the Uncas racing in to take her part in the combat once more; he could see the woods and town and the batteries and the sea stretching out on the other side.

But Clif had little thought for it all; wrath and disappointment filled his heart. He had come all this way for nothing; the spy had escaped him again.

He would scarcely have glanced about him at all had not a sound attracted his attention; he heard loud cheering; and disgusted though he was that could not fail to arouse his curiosity.

He gazed about him anxiously, and saw what it meant, the sound came from the shore of the bay a little way beyond.

Reinforcements were arriving. A boat's crew from the Nashville had crept quietly in toward the shore under the pretense of looking for the cable. And now they had heard the cheers of Clif's men, telling them that the time had come.

They had answered the shouts and rowed in with all their might. Even then they were scrambling out onto the

Hal Maynard Figures Thrillingly in all the "Starry Flag" Stories.

beach just as the boat's crew from the Uncas had done.

But Clif saw that with very little interest; he was still thinking of Ignacio.

He was on the point of turning to hurry down the ladder again, when he chanced to notice a flapping noise above him. It was the Spanish flag waving with the breeze.

The cadet took one glance at it and then out flashed his sword. With a single whack he severed the halliards. Then slowly, faster and faster, the hated banner glided down, and caught by the wind, sailed off and fluttered down to the ground below.

That was seen both from the ships and the landing party. Cheer after cheer rolled up at the triumph. But Clif did not stop to notice it; he had wasted too many precious seconds already.

He raced down the ladder again into the room where three of the sailors had mounted guard over the prisoners, three Spanish sailors. They had plucked up a little courage when they saw they were not going to be murdered.

They had given up their arms, and retreated into the corner again, when Clif came tearing down the ladder.

He frightened them more than ever, for he drew his sword and strode savagely over to them.

"Where is that spy?" he demanded, sternly.

One of them finally managed to answer, addressing Clif in Spanish; he did not seem to know whom the cadet meant by the "spy."

"I mean Ignacio!" snapped Clif impatiently. "And answer me without any fooling."

"He—he hid," stammered the frightened man.

"Where did he hide?"

"I—I do not know, senor. Santa Maria——"

"That is a lie!" snapped Clif, gripping his sword and frowning savagely.

He knew that the only way he could get any information was by frightening the man nearly to death; and so he sprang at him, while the sailor whimpered in fright.

"I—I do not know, senor," he cried again. "Por dios, I swear it. He went out the back door there, when you shouted, senor. Santa Maria! I cannot tell more!"

It was plain that the man was telling all he knew, and so Clif rushed to the door again. There was a sailor standing there on guard and one in the rear also.

"Nobody passed us," they both declared.

And so Clif began to realize to his disgust that his prize had really escaped him; he had had all his trip for nothing.

With his sword he poked round in all the odd corners of the building; he found a telegraphing outfit, and a half-completed arrangement for heliograph signaling, all of which it would be his duty to destroy. But of Ignacio, there was no sign.

"I guess he's gone," groaned Clif.

His attention was taken away from the matter just then by the arrival of the boat's crew from the Nashville. They came dashing up the hill, cheering and shouting for all they were worth.

They were under the command of one of the Nashville's young officers, Ensign Willard. When they reached the building Clif felt comparatively safe from an attack, for his small force was more than doubled.

The first sailor who entered the room bore something in his hand that fired Clif's blood, and for a moment almost made him forget Ignacio.

It was a brand new silk flag, and Clif

READ THE "STARRY FLAG."

sprang toward the sailor as he held it out to him. A moment later he was bounding up the ladder.

Fortunately, there was a double set of halliards to the flagpole, and one pair was still left. Clif unfolded the beautiful banner and then flung it to the breeze.

As he ran it up to its place he raised his hat and gave a wild yell of victory; it was answered by a perfectly deafening shout from the men below, and more faintly from the Nashville.

It was the first time that the Star Spangled Banner had waved over a captured bit of Cuban soil. It was enough to make the brave sailors cheer.

As Clif came down again, his blood thrilling with excitement, he saw that under orders from the Nashville Ensign Willard had set to work with his men to smash things to pieces in the enemy's signal station, which it would be obviously impossible to hold very long.

The sailors rather enjoyed that task. They were like a lot of small boys smashing windows in a deserted house. The way they chopped up the telegraph instruments was a caution.

It was a delicious pastime while it lasted, and everybody pitched in to have a share in the sport. It was interesting to fancy what the operators at the other end of that telegraph line must have thought was happening.

In that destruction, however, Clif took no share; it was not that he was opposed to it, for he held all things Spanish as smashable. But after the momentary excitement of hoisting the flag the old feeling of disgust had come over him again.

He had made the desperate sally for one purpose, and in that purpose he had failed.

He turned and strode disconsolately out of the building, where two of the merry tars, for lack of Spaniards, were

busily chopping holes in the rainspout of the building.

Clif did not join in the sport, but strode moodily away across the clearing.

He was still thinking of Ignacio.

"If I had only caught sight of him!" he groaned. "If I could only get one chance for a fair fight!"

There is a story in Æsop's fables of a traveler who, tired out by a long journey, sat down by the roadside and called upon Death to come to his relief. When Death came he found that all the frightened traveler had to ask was that he would go away again.

And so very likely it was in Clif's case.

For as it happened he was destined to have his wish come true; he was to catch sight of Ignacio, and that very soon.

Clif in his disgust at the Spanish spy's "escape" had forgotten to take account of the fact that the Spanish spy's hatred of him was, if possible, even more intense than Clif's own dislike. The man was quite as anxious for a whack at the cadet as the cadet for a chance to return it.

It was Clif, as fate had willed, who had foiled all of Ignacio's plots, and Ignacio's fury had increased with every one until it was now an all-consuming passion.

Ignacio was quite willing to give his life or risk it, for a chance to murder Clif.

The lad had strolled away a short distance across the clearing toward the thicket. He was still musing upon his failure to capture his dreaded enemy.

And he was suddenly startled to hear a slight noise in the thicket near him; he glanced up quickly, and to his uncontrollable horror saw Ignacio peering at him from the bushes.

The Spaniard's face was convulsed with rage; and one hand clutched a revolver, straight into the barrel of which Clif's staring eyes were looking.

"The Starry Flag" Floats Above All Others.

It was Ignacio's moment of triumph!

Clif staggered back with a cry of alarm as he saw the trap into which he had walked.

He heard the man hiss between his teeth a furious oath; and a second later he pulled the trigger; and there was a blinding flash.

CHAPTER V.

A RECKLESS CHASE.

Just what had happened during that terrible instant Clif could not have said; but it seemed to him as if there were two reports in quick succession. The second was the louder, Ignacio's.

It was that fact, and that alone, that saved Clif Faraday's life; one of the sailors had been watching him, and had seen Ignacio rise.

He had whipped out his revolver, and fired in one instant; he did not expect to hit, for he did not try to aim.

But the shot served its purpose; it had disconcerted the Spaniard at the moment he fired.

Clif felt a sharp stinging pain in his shoulder; he staggered back, and Ignacio, with a cry of triumph, turned and disappeared in the thicket.

It was well that the cadet fell, or the assassin might have fired again.

As it was, he fled, thinking that he had succeeded.

But Clif was not dead by a good deal. He was on his feet in a second or two, with only one idea in his mind. He whipped out his revolver and leaped into those bushes at the very top of his speed.

That he was badly wounded, that he might meet enemies, that Ignacio might turn, that he might not get back in time to join his friends—all were possibilities that never once occurred to Clif. In his mind there was but one thought—

there was Ignacio, the man he had meant to catch.

And he set out with the speed of a whirlwind. He fairly tore his way through the thicket.

The shouts of his friends seemed to fade in less than a minute. There was only one thing—the crashing sound ahead!

Even without the sound it would have been easy to follow Ignacio, by the path he tore through the thicket. It was easier for Clif to follow when the path was thus cleared for him.

But it would have made no matter to Clif had it been otherwise; he must have caught that man in any case, for his speed was something amazing. Clif would not have known himself then; all the wrongs he had suffered from Ignacio surged up before him, and he was as if possessed by a devil.

He had the strength of a trained runner. Every ounce of nerve and muscle in his body went into that blind chase.

It was swift and sure. Clif knew that he would catch him; he felt as if the fates were guiding him. Ignacio might dodge and turn and struggle on until his heart burst; he might turn and empty his revolver at Clif if he chose. But caught he was going to be all the same, and all Spain could not help it.

And so Clif shouldered his way on through the bush, bounding over stumps and fallen logs and streams, crashing through bushes and brambles and withered cane. His breath began to come hard, and the warm blood poured down over his revolver, but he never once faltered. He knew that the blood would not spoil the cartridge, and that was his only care.

On and on and on! The crashing sound seemed to come nearer every minute, the footsteps growing louder. Clif peered

All Army Details in "The Starry Flag" are Correct.

ahead grimly, gripping his weapon like death and racing on.

He knew that it could not be for much longer. Ignacio was lithe and active, but his strength was no match for the cadet's. He must soon turn, stand at bay, fight.

And that was all Clif wanted!

He got it. He bounded on, never faltering, never flagging; and then suddenly he burst out of the thicket and found himself on the bank of a little stream.

Ignacio had just leaped across it; he was just disappearing in the bushes again.

But he heard the step behind him, and he turned, like a stag at bay.

The villain's face as he fronted Clif at that moment was a study. Rage and despair and hatred, weakness from his terrible run and horror at discovering his victim seemingly come to life—all were written in his frenzied features.

Clif, as he saw him, had tossed up his revolver; his heart was positively gay then, bounding in triumph. He had his one desire.

Ignacio, too, raised his weapon, as he turned; he was a shade the quicker, too, and fired first.

But his aim was different then from his first cool one; his hands were trembling with weakness and rage. His shot went wild.

And the fever of the chase was in Clif's blood so that he laughed aloud; he saw that he had his man and a wild plan occurred to him—he would take him alive, drag him back by the hair of his miserable head and hang him from the cross tree of the vessel whose gallant commander he had once tried to stab.

Desperately calm and scornfully resolute was Clif as he aimed his own revolver. It was a careful aim, yet quick, so

that Ignacio might not have a third chance to fire.

Just what he meant to do Clif succeeded in doing. His shot struck Ignacio's hand where he held his revolver, and the Spaniard dropped it with an oath and a yell of pain.

And Clif laughed as he heard him.

"Surrender!" he called. "Quick!"

The baffled man cast in Clif's direction a look of hatred so intense and malignant that it lives in the cadet's memory to this day. The frenzied man would have torn out his heart if he could.

As it was, he turned once more and sprang toward the cover of the bushes, to make one more desperate effort at flight.

"Stop!" shouted Clif to him.

But the Spaniard did not heed; and slowly, never moving from where he stood, Clif raised his revolver and fired again.

His aim was still steady. He meant that bullet to stop Ignacio, and stop him it did.

It struck him in the thigh, and he dropped; he turned as he did so, and as his hand lighted on a stone beneath him he flung it in his hatred and savage helplessness straight at Clif's head.

But the lad stepped to one side and once more laughed. His heart was bounding in triumph just then; he felt that the purpose of his life was accomplished.

It seemed to Clif when he remembered that fever of his subsequently that his desire for revenge got too much control of him. But surely if ever vengeance was just it was just then. The memory of Morro's torture chamber was still dancing before Clif's eyes.

And so he had no pity for the hateful spy; he bounded lightly across the stream and stepped toward him.

As he did so he noticed a move of

Hurrah for Clif Faraday! Another Hurrah for Hal Maynard.

Ignacio's that was destined to prove important, of far more importance than anything that had so far transpired. Clif was glad indeed subsequently that he had noticed it.

The Spaniard evidently realized that there was no more hope for him, that he was a prisoner. If he had had a sword he would have fought with that, or even with tooth and nail.

But there was something else he had to think of; Clif saw him plunge his uninjured hand into his pocket, and thought it was another revolver.

But it was not. It was only a crumpled bit of paper, which Ignacio flung from him.

It landed in the middle of the little stream and danced merrily away with the current.

As has been said, Clif noticed that. And Clif's mind was a quick one. He knew that Ignacio had not thought of that for nothing.

Just as well as if he had seen that paper and read it, Clif knew that it contained important information of some kind.

And if that was the case it was Clif's business to get it; he hesitated not a second in thought, and only one while he snatched up the revolver Ignacio had dropped.

Then, thrusting that into his belt as he turned, sprang down into the bed of the stream and set out in chase of that hurrying bit of paper. The wounded Spaniard was safe to leave.

It proved by no means an easy chase, however.

The stream was a swift little mountain torrent, and it had caught that light object in its swiftest part; the fancy occurred to Clif that it was a Spanish stream and knew what the paper contained.

And it gave him a run for it, flinging and splashing over sand and rocks. Then it came to a deep shadowy pool out into the middle of which whirled the paper. Clif plunged in boldly.

That quick chase after the other long one left him quite breathless for a moment. He thrust the paper into his pocket and seizing the branch of an overhanging tree drew himself up to the bank to rest.

As it subsequently turned out, the run down the bed of the stream was an important run for Clif. It proved the saving of his life, though it was not for a minute or two that he discovered it.

He got his breath again; and then as he rose to his feet to return to his prisoner he drew out the paper and unfolded it to see what it was.

He saw that it contained a few words of writing on it, but before he had time to read them he heard a sound that made him start like a hunted deer.

He heard tramping footsteps, and a shout in Spanish; a second later rang out Ignacio's voice:

"Help! Help!"

Quick as a flash Clif thrust the paper back into his pocket, and sprang forward to listen; he heard a confused murmur of voices, and then again Ignacio's shout.

"Quick! Quick! Chase him! Por dios, he ran down the stream, and he's got our plans!"

And Clif, half dazed, heard a crashing sound in the bushes and a splashing in the stream, and realized that he had lost Ignacio again, and was in peril of his life. The Spanish were on his trail.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY.

For a moment Clif was quite paralyzed by the suddenness of that discovery. He

BE PATRIOTIC—WEAR A BUTTON.

had fancied himself safe just then—back in that wild thicket. And he thought that he had Ignacio safe, too.

But as he heard those cries he knew that Ignacio was safe in a far different way. He groaned in disgust with himself that he had not killed the villainous spy when he had the chance.

For a moment the lad actually retained a wild thought of dashing back there and shooting Ignacio or dying in the attempt. But then, as realizing from the sounds what the number of the enemy was, he knew that it would be suicide to try that.

And his heart bounded as he began to realize his own peril; his enemies were on his trail, and every instant increased his peril.

It was then that he was thankful for his short run down the stream. Had he been standing by Ignacio when those Spaniards burst through the thicket, nothing in the world could have saved him; as it was, he had a moment's start.

He sprang forward at a bound, his quick mind soon told him what it would be best to do. His pursuers, whoever they were, were coming down the stream; his only hope lay in dodging off to one side.

Fortunately the spot where he had landed concealed him for a moment with its thick bushes; he turned and took one swift glance behind him.

That one glance was enough. It showed him half a dozen Spanish soldiers just rounding a turn in the stream a short distance above, and with their rifles in their hands running and splashing along with all their might.

It was indeed a critical moment for Clif. He turned and, crouching in the grass, darted away into the thicket.

But he was not quick enough, for all his quickness; his blue uniform was seen by one of the soldiers.

And the man gave a yell.

"Mira! There he goes!"

A second later there was a sharp crack, followed by half a dozen more. The hum of Mauser bullets was about Clif's ears.

But none of them struck him and he was away like a startled deer into the brush; he heard the Spaniards hot on his trail and keeping up a continuous firing.

It was indeed a terrible situation for Clif, caught in that way, far back in the country and still half breathless from his first run. But as if the situation were not bad enough he found that he had lost his bearings.

He listened for the sound of the firing out in the bay and noticed then for the first time that it had ceased.

That seemed the last straw. Could it be that the ships had succeeded in cutting the cables and had withdrawn? Could they possibly be going without him?

It seemed quite likely to poor Clif, for he had lost his sense of time as well as of direction. He had no idea how long he might have been chasing Ignacio, and now that he came to think of it, it did seem a terribly long time. And so it was quite possible that the landing party had been compelled to retire and that Lieutenant Raymond had concluded his junior officer must be a prisoner.

Those were terrible possibilities; but Clif put them aside until he should succeed in reaching the bay. With those Spaniards hot on his track it did not seem likely that he would ever succeed in doing that.

But he meant to try his prettiest, so long as the bullets failed to bring him down; and he knew that those Spanish soldiers would have to be swift if they would catch him.

He still had a vague idea in which direction he ought to go to reach the

The Representative of all American Boys is Hal Maynard.

signal station. He bent all his energies to the task of plowing his way through that thicket.

It was a terrible run, and Clif never forgot it. His first long race with Ignacio had tired him. Now he had the same thing to repeat. This time fear was his spur, for he heard the enemy shouting and crashing along behind him.

He knew that if at any moment he let them get near enough to see him and fire at him, the end of the race would come at that same instant.

And so on and on through bushes and tangled vine and cane he drove, never looking back and never faltering. His chest began to burn and his head began to reel, but again and again he brace himself and dashed on and on and on.

There was one thing which in the excitement of his adventure with Ignacio Clif had quite forgot to notice—the fact that he was bleeding. He had an ugly wound in his shoulder, and when he moved it there was a sharp, grinding wrench that was agony.

Clif knew that it meant a broken bone; but he would not have heeded it had it not been for the loss of blood. He began to realize that that was weakening him.

He got dizzier and dizzier, fainter and fainter, his breath began to come in quick, choking gasps, and the ground seemed to reel and surge in front of him.

But still came the shouts and the noise of pursuit behind; it seemed to grow a little fainter, as if he were outdistancing his enemies. That fact only encouraged him to still more desperate and trying efforts.

So again and again he nerved himself, gathered his strength and once more fought his way forward. But he felt as if every effort was his last, as if he could not do that once more.

And yet he did, for hope and fear kept

him going; once he stumbled, and fell, but he rose again with a groan and sprang on.

Anxiously, as he went, he strained his eyes for the first sight of that signal tower, and his ears for the first sound of it. His life, his last hope of safety, hung on that.

For if he should reach the shore of the bay and find no one to help him, even if the ships were there, he would be shot down like a dog by the Spaniards behind him.

And so it was no wonder that he strained his ears and eyes. But he got no sign of his friends. The weary thicket still stretched on, and on interminably, but Clif thought he must fall where he was, and die of exhaustion before the Spanish reached him.

But that would have to be a quick death, for the Spaniards were close behind him, hot on the trail; they had his path to follow just as he had had Ignacio's, and Clif despaired of ever being able to shake them off.

Before he had gone many yards further, however, he came to the climax of the agonizing race. The climax seemed to Clif his ruin.

For he came to a broad, open, treeless space; and hearing the Spaniards so close behind him the exhausted lad realized to his horror that he could never get across that deadly space before the Spanish bullets brought him down.

He reeled and faltered at the edge; he felt as he stared wildly across it that this spot would witness his death. The long race across was such a hopeless one that he cared not even to try it.

And yet as it happened that seeming calamity proved Clif's salvation for a time. Despairing though he was and dazed, he had yet sense enough to think of one plan, a plan he would have tried

Hal Maynard has Good Friends. Are you One of Them?

at the very beginning had he known more about the Cuban style of fighting in this bush country.

He thought that in that dense thicket there might be a chance to hide; quick as the thought he sprang forward, ran down along the edge of the open space, and then crept silently back into the thicket again.

As he did so he heard the shouting Spaniards burst through and out into the open space. Panting and weak as he was, Clif was able to creep but a short distance more.

He came across a hiding-place that seemed just built for him, a big hollow log; he had just strength enough left to crawl in.

And there he lay panting, and gasping for breath, straining his ears to learn what the Spaniards would do.

CHAPTER VII.

IGNACIO'S SECRET.

It was a critical moment, but Clif found to his intense joy and thankfulness that they were going to do what of all things he would have wished.

It seemed from the sounds that there were a good number of the enemy, a great many more than the half dozen or so Clif had caught sight of, and close on his trail they came, tearing out into the open space.

They saw his track where he had forced his way through the thicket; and they knew perfectly well that he was trying to reach the shore, the signal station where his companions were. So the possibility of his having hidden or delayed never once occurred to them.

To a man they raced across the open space, and Clif, as he heard their shouts receding in the distance, almost fainted with relief.

And yet it would have been a poor time to faint, and Clif knew it. Exhausted though he was he had resolution and will power enough to keep his senses about him.

For he knew that his safety was for a moment only; if once the Uncas and the Nashville steamed off and left him there he would be in a terrible plight indeed. He might as well be killed or captured at once as have that happen.

And so the seconds were precious just then. Just as soon as the sounds of the pursuit began to die in the distance, Clif gathered his strength and crawled out of his hiding place in the log.

Nor did he stop at that; one swift glance around showed him that there was nobody near. And he staggered to his feet.

He took out his handkerchief and tied up the wound in his shoulder as best he could. It was enough to stop the slow trickling of the blood, and that was sufficient for the moment.

And then he crept silently forward to where he could peer out into the open space; he saw no sign of the Spaniards. Clif sat down for a moment to rest and collect his thoughts. It flashed over him that those Spanish soldiers that had been chasing him might have another purpose in view besides. From the number of them it was more than likely that they had come round to attack the landing party of the Americans.

If that was the case it put Clif's friends in danger, but it relieved him. For it meant that the Spaniards were after larger game than he and would not stop to search when they once found he had eluded them.

But there was another danger, one that brought Clif to his feet with a leap. The Americans had no reason for holding the

Three Cheers and a Tiger for "The Starry Flag."

signal station any longer, having accomplished their purpose of wrecking it.

So when they were attacked they would without doubt retreat to their boats under the protection of the guns of the ships. And having gotten on board they would of course conclude that Clif had been either captured or shot, and that there was no use delaying on his account.

Naturally that was a terrible possibility, and Clif started forward anxiously in the direction of the bay.

Before he had taken ten steps the silence was broken by the crack of a revolver, followed by a volley; half a minute later several of the Nashville's big guns roared.

The sound came from the direction of the bay, and told Clif plainer than words that his former pursuers had attacked the party at the signal station.

What was worse, it meant that the latter must already be in their boats! For the Nashville could not have taken part in a shore engagement for fear of hitting her own men.

And the instant that that terrible truth was plain to Clif, forgetting all about the danger of being seen, he dashed wildly across the open space which had caused him so much dread before.

But fortunately for him there were no stragglers among those Spaniards. Clif reached the other side and plunged into the thicket unseen.

Now he once more had the firing to guide him in the right direction; the sounds were startlingly near, too, and he knew he must almost have reached the shore.

He had not gone very far before he began to realize again the necessity for caution; the first wave of excitement passed off, and he realized very soon that

it would make no difference to him whether he reached the boats or not, if he let himself be seen and shot at by some of the Spaniards in the meantime.

And it was fortunate for him that he began to pick his way more cautiously; for he went on a short ways, the firing growing nearer and nearer; and then suddenly just as had happened when leading the attack with his six men he caught sight of the flag on top of the signal tower.

And a single glance showed him that it was the same flag he had seen before; the American flag had been lowered! The Spaniards had once more retaken the place.

That discovery did not surprise Clif as much as one might have expected. He had already guessed as much when he heard the Nashville's guns, which by the way still kept booming.

But Clif did not have much time to speculate about that situation just then. His own situation was about as precarious, as could well be imagined, and it occupied all his attention.

As he realized how close he was to his enemies, the solitary American gripped his revolver tightly and crouched low in the bushes, peering about him in every direction. But he saw no sign of any one; the firing all seemed to be beyond the signal station, down the little hill by the beach.

And from that fact Clif gradually grew somewhat bolder. He crept forward until he could see the signal station plainly.

He found as he had thought that there was no one near it; Clif himself was hiding in about the same spot as the one from which Ignacio had fired at him.

But the cadet did not delay there a moment; crouching low and stealing along silently, he made his way swiftly around through the thicket. He wished

"THE STARRY FLAG" ONLY COSTS FIVE CENTS.

to reach the beach, and that without a moment of delay.

He was not seen by the Spaniards, nor did he see anything of them until he reached the shore, where the whole scene was before his eyes.

The Uncas and the Nashville had apparently completed their cable cutting task and had steamed out of close range of the batteries. Their boat's crews, meanwhile (the ones which had been on shore), had been attacked by the party of Spaniards who had previously pursued Clif.

The conflict between them was taking place a short ways down the shore from where Clif was crouching in the bushes. The Americans were in their boats? another boat had come in to take off the men of the Uncas) and the Spaniards were firing at them from the land; the two warships were shelling the Spaniards vigorously meanwhile.

That was just what Clif had expected to find. But it put him in a terrible plight. For the rowboats were already three-quarters of the way out to the vessels—and without Clif!

It was true he was in no danger while he stayed hiding there, even though he was close to the signal station. But he could not stay there forever. And if he came out on the beach to signal to his friends he would be a target for the Spanish bullets.

It was an unpleasant position the cadet found himself in, and he could see no way out of it. Yet he knew that if he was to do anything he ought to be setting about it soon.

For as soon as those boats' crews got on board the vessels would most likely steam out of the harbor, the Spaniards following along the shore and banging away spitefully and harmlessly as was their

custom. How Clif was to attract the American's attention he did not see.

He thought for a moment of trying to swim out, but he realized that in his weak state he could not do it; nor did he care to be a floating target for two or three dozen Spaniards in the course of it.

The venturesome cadet had gotten himself into a most unpleasant predicament. For a while he almost wished that he had not undertaken that chase of Ignacio.

For he and his friends were separated apparently forever. Even if he could succeed in attracting their attention he felt that he had no right to do it.

For a boat's crew that came in to rescue him would have to face a terrible fire from the well hidden Spaniards; and when they got there they would in all probability find him a corpse.

And that made him quite undecided what to do. He was half dazed as he crouched in his hiding-place and watched the boats row out to the ships.

He saw the men clamber aboard before very much more time had passed. He longed very much to be with them, even as one of the wounded whom he saw being lifted aboard.

But every minute that passed made it seem less and less likely that that wish would ever be granted. Clif blamed himself for having been so blind and reckless in his chase of Ignacio.

Before very many minutes had passed, however, he changed his mind on that last point. Something happened to make him very glad indeed that he had done as he did.

And the same event made a decided change in his future plans also, made him think that even at the cost of a dozen lives it was important that he should succeed in reaching the ships.

A rather strange event it must have

HAL MAYNARD LOVES HIS COUNTRY.

been, the reader is probably thinking. And so it was.

It may be told in a word—Clif read that bit of paper he had rescued from the stream!

And it was the possession of that that made the change in his view, made him act so differently from what he would otherwise have done.

For previously Clif had half made up his mind to strike back in the country and try to fall in with some of the Cuban insurgents, since he could not hope to get back to the Uncas.

It may seem strange that he had not thought anything of that bit of paper he found. But the only time he had stopped was when he crawled into that log and he had been so dazed and exhausted to think of anything then.

He would not have thought of it even now if he had not chanced to put his hand into his pocket and touch it. Half mechanically, his eyes still on the ships in the bay, he drew it out.

It did not flash over him until a moment or two later what it was he had in his hand. But when it did he gave a start.

For he recollected how anxious Ignacio had been that he should not get it. Ignacio had thought of it even when he believed his death was at hand.

And there was echoing in Clif's ear the shout he had heard:

"Catch him! He's got all our plans!"

And it was tremblingly and eagerly that the cadet unfolded that water-soaked bit of paper.

It was a delicate task and it took him a long time to do it. The paper was so soft that it tore and mashed in his hands, and the writing on it was almost illegible.

Yet lying there in his hiding-place Clif had plenty of leisure to attend to it. He

got so absorbed in the task that he soon forgot his peril and where he was.

It was a small sheet of yellow paper with a printed letter head upon it. The cadet recognized it as a telegraph blank.

And it flashed over him that it was a message which Ignacio had either sent or received; and that explained his going to the signal station.

Clif soon saw that the former guess was correct; it was a message Ignacio had been sending; for his name was signed at the bottom.

And Clif spelled it out laboriously, word by word, sometimes letter by letter. What he learned was the cause of his sudden change of mind before mentioned.

The message disclosed what was perhaps the cleverest bit of trickery Clif had heard of in his life. As the cadet finally managed to read the words. They were as follows:

"Captain General Blanco, Havana:

"Succeeded in moving cables two hundred yards to the east. Two of the enemy's ships are now taking up the dummy cables. Ignacio."

And Clif dropped that bit of paper and stared about him as if he had been shot.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLIF'S DARING ACT.

It was small wonder that Clif was aghast as he made that discovery. For a moment or two he was hardly able to realize what is meant.

All the Americans' work of the morning had been for nothing!

They had been dredging up false cables laid in the harbor by that clever villain, and were steaming off in triumph leaving the real cables untouched.

And Clif had gotten the secret!

The reader may readily believe after

You are not up to date if you don't read "The Starry Flag."

that that he was glad he had chased Ignacio, even though he had failed to kill him.

Clif saw then why Ignacio had been so anxious to get rid of that tell-tale bit of paper.

The fact that he knew that secret made the cadet feel that a heavy responsibility rested upon him. In fact it was so great a responsibility that for a minute or two his mind was in a whirl.

"Those ships must not get away!" he kept muttering. "But great heavens, how am I to stop them?"

He stared at them wildly. By that time they had gotten their men aboard and were well on their way out of the bay. And how was Clif to stop them?

He thought of rushing out on the beach and shouting to them; but he knew that the Spaniards would reach him before the ships.

Yet he felt that as those two vessels came down the shore and past him he would have his only chance to signal them, and that he must do it even if it cost him his life.

Thoughts surged through his mind so fast that his brain was in a whirl. And all the time the precious minutes were flying and the ships steaming off without him and his all-important secret.

He felt quite certain that Lieutenant Raymond was not going off without him except very reluctantly, and it was more than likely he was scanning the shore anxiously for some trace of him. In fact as the vessels drew nearer Clif fancied he could see him standing on the deck with the glass in his hand.

It must be understood that the ships had been much farther into Cardenas Bay than the signal station near which Clif was hiding. Consequently they had to come much nearer to him and pass close to where he was.

Clif watched them anxiously; he even crept half way out of the bushes.

He thought that possibly they were watching the shore closely and that they might see some sort of signal, if he set it out; the Spaniards were still popping away a short distance down the shore and so it would evidently do no good for Clif to fire his revolver as a signal.

But he thought of the handkerchief he had tied about his wound. The instant the thought occurred to him he tore it off and thrust it out through the bushes.

And he lay clutching it in his hand feverishly waiting until the two ships got near, so that he might wave it.

His eyes meanwhile were as if glued to them. Gradually as they came more and more broadside on he could make out the men upon them. They were distant not half a mile, but the air over the bay was sultry and not very clear, so that the anxious cadet could scarcely hope to be recognized.

That is unless some one should chance to turn his glass on his face as it peered out of the thicket. Clif saw a blue uniformed figure on the Uncas and was sure it must be Lieutenant Raymond; but he was attending to some wounded man who lay on the deck.

He had apparently no idea of looking for Clif; and the lad groaned aloud as he realized it.

"They think I'm killed!" he muttered.

And he could not blame them for so believing; he had dashed away in wild pursuit of Ignacio and for fifteen or twenty minutes he had not returned; meantime there had been all that firing, and after it the Spanish troops had appeared from the same direction. How could any one be expected to think Clif safe?

And so as it happened no one was watching the bushes. The Spanish were

"THE STARRY FLAG" IS NAILED TO THE MAST.

still firing from there, but their aim was contemptible and they were being swiftly left behind. The Americans found enough to do to clear away the effects of the batteries' heavy fire.

Nearer and nearer came the two vessels, the little *Uncas* in the lead. Clif could almost fancy he recognized Lieutenant Raymond's face.

And then he began to wave his small signal frantically; as the vessels got nearly opposite to him his anxiety increased every moment. It was agony to him to think that his fate hung on the chance of some one's eye chancing to be caught by that fluttering white signal.

Yet to give any other signal was almost impossible.

Clif felt that if he had to stand that strain long he would go mad; the thought of those vessels gliding past him so serenely filled him with a wild impulse to rush out and shout to them, an impulse he found it hard to restrain.

And still they steamed straight on, at full speed, all unconscious of Clif and his secret. The sailors were all busily at work cleaning up and putting things in order, not even condescending to glance at the shore, where the Spaniards were popping away and where Clif was wildly waving his bloody handkerchief.

Clif was staring at them so anxiously that he had eyes for nothing else; he had laid his revolver on the ground and if any of the enemy had come through the thicket or down the beach they would have taken the unfortunate cadet completely by surprise.

But he was fast getting into the state that he did not care; he was getting desperate.

For the two ships went on without heeding him; they got opposite to him—went slowly past him, while his agony of mind and body was truly terrible. No

shipwrecked mariner trying to attract the attention of a passing vessel ever suffered more from disappointment and despair. For no mariner was ever in greater danger, or had such important news to communicate as Clif. It was this last fact that tormented him most; he could have borne his own peril.

As the two vessels went on Clif saw them dip their colors and begin signaling; he saw at one glance that two other vessels had appeared at the harbor's mouth.

They were the expected ones, the torpedo boat *Winslow* and the gunboat *Hudson*. But Clif scarcely more than glanced at them.

For the *Uncas* and the *Nashville* still sped on. Clif in his anxiety crept out farther and farther, waving his handkerchief farther and farther out. And still no one heeded him, no one saw him.

Once past him they glided away with swiftness that was appalling; Clif gritted his teeth and clinched his hands as he watched them. His despair increased with every second.

He got more and more desperate as hope left him. He thought of how the government would be handicapped, supposing the cables cut when they were still in operation. The future of the war might hang on that mistake, and the thought that he alone could rectify it set Clif very nearly wild.

And the time came when he could stand it no longer. The time came when he realized he might wave that flag of his all day unseen. And he felt then that it was cowardice in him to do no more.

Clif Faraday was no coward; he knew that it was his duty to signal those vessels at any cost. And he soon made up his mind to do it.

The Spaniards might kill him. But it was certain that the Americans when

Only in "The Starry Flag" can you Read About Hal Maynard.

they once recognized him would row in to get his dead body. There was grim satisfaction in that thought.

Clif took the all important paper and put it in his pocket so that the end of it showed and would surely be noticed. And then he shut his teeth with a snap and gathered himself together.

It was a desperate thing the lad meant to do; it would have made the bravest hesitate. The shore was lined with Spaniards; the woods were fairly swarming with them. And out on the beach his blue-uniformed figure would make a fair target.

But when Clif Faraday had once made up his mind to do a thing he usually wasted no time in hesitating. And after all it was a relief to him to do what he did then. For he had been longing with all his heart and soul to do it.

With one spring he was out of the thicket, clear in view of the ships.

Most of the Spaniards he knew to be in the direction of the town; the ships were going the other way, and Clif darted after them. He ran with all his speed, bounding away down the beach.

And he raised his one well arm and waved it; he drew a deep breath and shouted at the top of his lungs:

"Help! help! Come back!"

And then, still speeding on, he watched for the effect of his desperate act of heroism.

The effect was instant. The yell was heard by every man on all four ships.

Clif saw Lieutenant Raymond snatch up his glass and stare at him; and that was enough.

It was well that it was; an instant later there was a sharp crack behind Clif and another in the same breath. Two bullets whistled past him, one tearing up the sand just beside him.

The Spaniards, too, had heard the cry!

And like a flash Clif turned and dashed into the bushes once more to hide.

CHAPTER IX.

A CLOSE SHAVE.

Then indeed Clif Faraday's position was a dangerous one; certainly it would have been hard to think how his peril could have been greater.

And things moved with lightning-like rapidity, for the few moments that followed.

Half a dozen of the Spaniards who chanced to be nearest had dashed out of the thicket and set out in chase of Clif. They were still running with all their might down the beach when the cadet disappeared.

The men of the Uncas and the Nashville must have taken their part in the struggle without even waiting for the command; for it seemed as if Clif's shout were hardly out of his mouth before half a dozen of them whipped out their revolvers and opened fire on his pursuers.

And the large guns chimed in a moment later; a perfect storm of shot swept the beach.

It was well aimed, too. It had to be, for fear of hitting the one it was meant to save.

Before the withering fire some of which passed dangerously near to the lad's hiding-place, the Spaniards recoiled in haste; only one of them had the nerve to press on, and he, clutching his rifle in his hand, plunged into the bushes.

But he never caught sight of Clif; the lad had kept his revolver in his hand and he fired straight at the man's head. The soldier staggered backward out on the beach.

And as if to let Clif know that his act was seen a second volley of shots came from the vessels out in the bay sweeping the woods on both sides of him.

Do You Want to Know About our Army and Navy? Read "The Starry Flag."

There was not a man on either of the ships who was not anxious to help that brave young cadet; they knew of the gallant charge he had led through the woods, and they made the place hot for any Spaniards who might be in the neighborhood.

They came very near making it hot for Clif, too; some of the bullets came dangerously close to him. But he looked and saw that the two vessels had begun to swing round and head in his direction.

And also, the Winslow and the Hudson, apparently comprehending the situation, had put on full steam and were sweeping toward him. The Winslow, fastest of them all, would plainly be the first to reach Clif.

And yet the lad's peril was just then at its very greatest. The Spaniards had been foiled in their attempt to attack him from the beach, but that made them try it from the other side all the more fiercely.

Clif heard them shouting to each other back in the thicket, and knew that every one in the neighborhood was making for him. And he dared not change his position again for it would put him in the fire of the American ships.

So he remained crouching where he was, but he turned like a stag at bay to fight to the very last gasp; he was wide awake and active then—never more so in his life, for to that crisis all his energies had risen, and his weakness was forgotten in a moment.

He crouched behind a fallen log, the deep grass hiding him completely, eyes and ears were both on the alert.

In the meantime he reloaded his revolver, or rather he began to; he did not quite have time to finish, for he heard quick footsteps in the thicket near him and knew that the first of his enemies had arrived.

A moment later he saw them, two soldiers with bayoneted guns gripped tight in their hands. They were coming swiftly, peering about in every direction.

They had not yet seen Clif, and it seemed a cruel thing to do. But in a terrible crisis like that there was no time to hesitate. Clif's revolver rang out twice in instant succession, and the men dropped without a movement or a sound.

Those reports must have been heard by the ships, for there was another rattling volley and once more the woods around Clif echoed with the sharp ping of the bullets and the crashes of the heavier shot.

But the reports were heard by the infuriated Spaniards as well, and told them exactly where their victim lay.

It was not fifteen seconds more before two more of them dashed toward the spot, their faces alight with excitement and the heat of running.

The foremost of them caught sight of Clif's face peering through the foliage at him, and he started back with an eager cry.

"Mira! See there!"

He swung up his rifle, but he never completed the action; for Clif's revolver was already leveled.

The man staggered backward, his eager cry changed to a yell of pain.

The second soldier crouched in the grass out of sight; Clif saw him moving, evidently about to fire.

It was a critical moment. Clif fired instantly when he saw the grass moving. The man must have been struck, for he leaped up with an oath.

As he did so Clif fired a second shot at him and the soldier fell across the body of his comrade.

But that was the last cartridge Clif had!

And he heard shouts and tramping

DON'T FORGET "THE STARRY FLAG."

near, and coming nearer; evidently a whole party was making their way through the thicket to attack him.

It was a moment of peril, and called for instant action. Clif was quick enough.

The warships were banging away, sweeping the woods. But it would be no worse to be struck by an American bullet than a Spanish one. To remain there was instant death.

Clif was on his feet like a flash. Bending his head, crouching low, and yet running with the speed of a deer, he darted way through the thicket, down along the shore in the direction from which the American ships were speeding.

His peril was terrible at that moment, for the woods through which he ran were in a perfect hailstorm of bullets. The Americans could not do much to help him, but what little they could do they were doing with a vengeance.

A six-pound shot whirled past so close in front of Clif's face that he actually felt the swirling of the air; and he felt a bullet cut its way through his cap; but he raced on nevertheless for about fifteen yards further.

Then once more he crouched to hide.

This time he had no weapon to trust to but his sword; he had left his useless revolver behind him. He knew that his only hope lay in hiding.

And he sought out the heaviest part of the thicket, with a little hollow of earth to protect him from the American shells. Then he crouched, panting for breath and peering about him with his haggard bloodshot eyes.

He knew that if anybody discovered him then it was all up with him.

And so the waiting was agony. Those vessels had been a mile or so away and even the swiftest vessel cannot make that distance in less than three or four minutes. Those minutes were the longest of Clif's life.

For he heard all around him the trampling of the Spanish troops. Those men were brave, certainly; one should give them the credit for that. There was one unceasing rain of bullets, and shot, and shell tearing through that thicket and mowing them down.

But they kept right on with their hunt for Clif.

They seemed strangely anxious to capture one solitary officer. Clif could not account for it at first, but he finally guessed the reason, and as usual Ignacio was to blame.

It was evident that he had told them of the secret Clif knew; and he had probably added a few lies to make them search for him the harder.

In that case Clif knew that the message in his pocket would be seen by the Americans if the enemy succeeded in killing him. He was half questioning if it was not his duty to make a dash out on the beach, where they could not get his body.

Just then, however, the thought was driven from his mind by a terrible event.

For he had still kept listening anxiously, tracing the footsteps as they moved about; he knew that every one of them meant an enemy and certain death for him. And so he fairly held his breath whenever one seemed to come near him.

The Spaniards were evidently hurrying to and fro and beating up the bush with sword and bayonet. Clif could hear them shouting to each other—occasionally challenging as they met.

But none of them came his way until at least two long minutes had passed. The fire of the ships had half slackened for a moment, as if the Americans, hearing no more of Clif, had concluded that he must have been overwhelmed.

And in the lull and silence Clif heard a twig crack—so near that it seemed as if it were right above his head!

He crouched in horror, as suddenly as if he were trying to sink into the ground; but as he heard the footstep again, even more near, he turned his head silently and stole one swift glance in the direction of the sound.

And he saw a sight that made his blood run cold; a Spaniard wearing a uniform that showed him to be a cavalry scout was crouching in the grass not ten yards from Clif!

He had his carbine in one hand; and his head was bent low. He was peering at the ground.

HOW ABOUT HAL MAYNARD? HE'S ALL RIGHT!

And a moment later he straightened up with a soft exclamation.

"Carramba! His footstep!"

And Clif's heart seemed to turn to ice within him. The man was tracking him!

Three steps more the Spaniard took, his sharp eyes darting about like a snake. Clif's glance was fairly petrified, fastened upon him, as if the cadet had been some animal the snake had charmed.

Three steps! And then once more the man glanced at the ground and then once more around him. That time his swift look stopped when it came to where Clif was crouching.

And their eyes met!

For a moment the cadet was uncertain if the man had seen him or not, but that was only for an instant.

A look of delight swept over the man's face.

"Por dios!" he gasped.

He sprang back and gave a loud shout of warning. A moment later he swung up his carbine and Clif found himself staring full into the muzzle. He closed his eyes and waited for the shot.

CHAPTER X.

THE END OF THE ADVENTURE.

Clif suffered agony of mind at that awful instant; all his wearied faculties seemed numb. And he only knew that he was waiting to hear the report.

He heard it, but it was a different one from the one he expected. Just what actually happened he would have found it hard to say.

All he knew was that just in front of his eyes there was a terrific explosion, as if the whole earth had heaved up one mighty blast; the forest seemed tumbling about his ears; an avalanche seemed to overwhelm him.

And he found himself half suffocated, and in absolute darkness, struggling beneath a load of earth; it was all he could do to stagger out from under it.

And as he gazed about him, dazed, he saw a great yawning hole in the earth a short ways to one side, and the mangled body of the Spanish scout near it. Clif knew then that a shell, probably from one of the Hudson's heavier guns, must have exploded near him.

The suddenness and the horror of it left Clif only half conscious. But he had not an instant to lose.

There was first the man's gun! He seized it with a gasp of delight.

And then Clif thought of his shout. It was already being answered by his companions back in the woods. Clif made up his mind to take one last desperate risk.

The ships must be near him then; at any rate, there was no more safety for him in the woods. He could not hope for another such deliverance.

He turned and dashed out of the thicket again, out to the open beach, glancing wildly about him as he did so.

He saw none of the enemy. But instead of that, a glorious sight met his eyes.

He saw the Winslow not a hundred yards from shore; a small boat full of eager sailors in the very act of putting off!

And when Clif bounded out into sight, from all four of the vessels came a cheer that rent the sky.

And it was followed by a volley that fairly made the water shake, and drowned everything else in the terrific roar. For everybody might fire into the woods with impunity then. There was no danger of striking Clif.

And such a hurricane of bullets and roaring shells tore through the place that if a Spaniard were left alive in them it must have been by a miracle.

But of that Clif did not think any more; nor did he care. He managed to stagger out as far as the water's edge, and there he tumbled forward flat upon his face.

If any Spaniard were able to come out there and shoot him he might come and welcome. Clif was exhausted, perfectly paralyzed; he could not move again, and he did not try.

But he was still conscious all the time, still thinking—thinking of but one thing, the thing he had been thinking of all that time. The message in his pocket!

And that was what made him so desperately calm. He felt that the Spaniards might perhaps put a bullet into him, but through the storm of shot they could not run down the beach to get his body.

And that was the only thing Clif cared about then.

He lay prostrate on the sand, his heavy eyes fixed on the boat which was tearing in at an amazing rate of speed. Another was just putting off from the Nashville to aid it. The landing of both protected by the galling fire from the four ships.

The fire was so heavy and so well directed, sweeping the whole stretch of shore, that it was little wonder that anxious as they were to do it, none of the Spaniards succeeded in getting near enough to fire on Clif. He lay there as safe as if there were no Spaniards within miles.

And it was but a very few seconds more before the rowboat shot in toward the beach, the young ensign in the stern urging the sailors on with all his might.

And the moment that it grounded on the sand, within ten yards of where Clif lay, the sailors sprang out, and without waiting even to haul it up, seized their revolvers and dashed up the beach. They made straight for the bushes, with the gallant officer in the lead.

It was a brave charge, but there was not the least need of it, for there was no one to resist it.

The only Spaniard who was to be seen was lying a short distance back in the thicket with half of his head torn away by a six-pound shot; he had come very near settling Clif, but he had not succeeded.

And so, leaving the sailors to scour the woods, the young officer hurried down to Clif, whom he found half raised up on one arm. The ensign caught him and lifted him up.

He knew Clif; had met him in Key West, and Clif recognized him with a faint smile. Bagley was his name, since familiar to all of us. He was a tall, handsome young man, and he raised Clif up cheerily, yet with a glance of horror at his bloodstained and clotted uniform.

"You've had a hard time of it, old man," he said. "But you're safe now."

Clif's answer was, by an act, an act he had been longing to do for an hour. He reached his hand into his pocket, and

with trembling fingers held out the torn bit of paper.

"Take it!" he gasped. "Take it!"

He sank back into the ensign's arms, his eyes closing wearily. The young officer needed but a glance to see that he was unconscious.

And so he laid him down on the sand again and with a puzzled look on his face, stared at the paper.

It was in Spanish, and he could not read it; but he called one of the sailors whom he knew could translate it. When the man spelled it out one may readily believe that the ensign opened his eyes in amazement.

He was almost too amazed to think; but just then the Nashville's boat landed, and after a hasty consultation with the officer, Ensign Bagley gave him the paper and the boat started back again to the Nashville.

Clif was gently lifted into the other. The young ensign held him in his lap until they reached the Uncas, which by that time had steamed in near the shore.

There the old surgeon hastily removed the unconscious lad's coat, and after shaking his head over the ugly-looking wound, carried him below and proceeded to dress it and restore the lad to consciousness. It was a task which did not prove very easy, for Clif was much weakened.

Meanwhile, the arrival of the all important telegram had caused no little excitement on the Nashville. The officers were glad indeed that they had managed to rescue the brave cadet, and there was much speculation as to how he could have gotten the paper.

The commanders of the other vessels were summoned to the Nashville for a hasty conference; the result of it is a matter of history and is doubtless well known to the reader.

It was decided of course that the real cables must be cut, and that without delay; the Winslow, Hudson and Nashville cleared for action again, and steamed in to do it.

The Uncas lay disconsolately out in the offing watching them; she took no part in the engagement, for she had on

Remember the Maine! Remember, too, "The Starry Flag."

board those who had been wounded in the first sharp action.

And the heavier vessels were more fitted for the work anyhow.

Clif lay in his cabin on the little gun-boat listening to the sounds; he knew perfectly well what it meant, but he was glad that the Uncas took no part in it.

All desire for fighting had left him for the time. He felt that he had earned a rest.

So he closed his eyes and the sound of the distant firing put him to sleep. He knew nothing of what happened.

But it is hardly necessary for us to go over it; every one knows the story of that next half an hour—how the three vessels steamed in right under the guns of the Spanish batteries and stayed there, while the enemy's gunners got the range.

Then, raked by shot and shell the Winslow's engines were disabled. When the work was completed, she found herself unable to withdraw.

The fatal shell which cost us the first of our gallant officers, exploded right in the face of young Bagley, killing him instantly, and wounding half a dozen others.

After that came the trying delay while the Hudson got her tow-line attached to the disabled vessel, the Spanish batteries meanwhile keeping up their merciless fire. The tow-rope broke, and another had to be substituted, all in the face of the enemies' guns.

And then the battered ships drew slowly out from their terrible position, the unfortunate victims still lying where they had fallen on the deck. But the cables were cut—the real ones, thanks to Clif Faraday's pluck.

Clif never saw Ensign Bagley again; and perhaps it was just as well that he did not, for the deadly shell had made a

sad sight of the handsome young officer. He heard the story the next day, when he was stronger; all they told him then was that his terrible experience had not been gone through with for nothing—the cables were cut.

Clif shed tears for his friend the ensign, whose fate had been so tragic and sudden. The cadet never forgot the welcome grasp of those strong young arms as they raised him from the sand in the morning of that memorable Cardenas engagement. Within that same hour it was that he met his tragic death—went

“Where the war drums beat no longer,
And the battle flags are furled.”

[THE END.]

The next number of True Blue will contain “Caught in a Trap; or, Clif Faraday's Terrible Set Back,” by Ensign Clarke Fitch, U. S. N.

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Show Your Colors!

Every American boy should wear a patriotic emblem to show where his sympathies lie in these stirring times of war.

Messrs. Street & Smith have made arrangements to present a patriotic badge or button to every reader of their popular publications for boys. The conditions are easy. Read them.

We publish six 32-page, illuminated cover weeklies for boys, retailing for five cents each, as follows:

The True Blue,
The Starry Flag,
The Tip Top Weekly,

The Klondike Kit Weekly,
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We wish the readers of one series to become acquainted with the entire line. On and after the present date the coupon at the foot of this column will be printed in each one of the above-mentioned publications. Three coupons, each clipped from a different publication, mailed to our office, will entitle you to one of the following, sent to your address, post-paid, free of all expense.

1. American Flag, embossed on gold ground, button or pin as preferred.
2. Aluminum Medal with Admiral Dewey's portrait on front, and picture of the Maine on reverse, pendant, from Aluminum emblem.
3. The American Flag, in metal, embossed in red, white, blue and gold. Three styles—button, scarf pin and ladies' hat pin. State your choice.
4. American Flag on white enamelled button with lever-hinge. (Two of these will make a neat pair of cuff buttons.)
5. Silk Bow, with American and Cuban flags combined.
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7. Button 1 1/4 inches in diameter in the following designs:
A—American Flag. B—Cuban Flag. C—American and Cuban Flags together. D—American and English Flags together. E—Admiral Dewey. F—Admiral Sampson. G—Battleship Maine. H—"Now, will you be good." I—The Iowa. J—The Oregon. K—The Massachusetts. L—The Indiana. M—The Brooklyn. N—The Columbia. O—The Texas. P—General Lee (order by letter and number, as 7-B., 7-D., etc.)

You can secure as many pins and badges as you desire, provided you send sufficient coupons. Three coupons secure any of the above—provided each of the set of three is from a different publication. ORDER BY NUMBER.

Send in your coupon. Remember this is a purely gratuitous gift on our part, intended to call your attention to others of our publications besides the ones you are now purchasing. If you cannot procure what you desire from your newsdealer, send us ten cents and one coupon, and we will send you by return mail a copy of two other publications and the badge which you may select. Address your coupons to

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One coupon from the True Blue, accompanied by two others, each from a different one of the following publications: Starry Flag Weekly, Klondike Kit, Tip Top Weekly, Nick Carter Weekly, or Diamond Dick, Jr. entitle the sender to a free badge or button as described above.

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History tells us that wrestling was the first form of athletic pastime. Without doubt, it gives strength and firmness, combined with quickness and pliability, to the limbs, vigor to the body, coolness and discrimination to the head and elasticity to the temper, the whole forming an energetic combination of the greatest power to be found in man. The book is entitled PROFESSOR MULDOON'S WRESTLING. It is fully illustrated, and will be sent postpaid on receipt of ten cents. Address

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Complete instructions for playing many of the most popular out-of-door games is found in this book. The games are illustrated and very easily mastered. Price ten cents. Address

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AMERICAN HYMN.

Speed our Republic,
O Father on high!
Lead us in pathways of justice and right;
Rulers, as well as the ruled, 'one and
all',
Girt thou with virtue the armor of
might!
Hail, three times hail to our country
and flag!
Rulers as well as the ruled, 'one and all,'
Girt Thou with virtue the armor of
might!
Hail, three times hail to our country and
flag!
Foremost in battle for freedom to stand,
We rush to arms when aroused by its
call;
Still as of yore, when George Washing-
ton led,
Thunders our war cry, we conquer or
fall!
Hail, three times hail to our country and
flag!
Still as of yore when George Washing-
ton led,
Thunders our war cry, we conquer or
fall!
Hail, three times hail to our country
and flag!
Faithful and honest to friend and to foe,
Willing to die in humanity's cause,
Thus we defy all tyrannical pow'r,
While we contend for our Union and
laws!
Hail, three times hail to our country and
flag!
Thus we defy all tyrannical pow'r,
While we contend for our Union and
laws!
Hail, three times hail to our country
and flag!
Rise up, proud eagle, rise up to the
clouds!
Spread thy broad wings o'er this fair
western world!
Fling from thy beak our dear banner of
old—
Show that it still is for freedom un-
furled!
Hail, three times hail to our country and
flag!
Fling from thy beak our dear banner
of old—
Show that it still is for freedom unfurled!
Hail, three times hail to our country
and flag!

FIRMLY STAND, MY NATIVE LAND.

— — —

Firmly stand, firmly stand, my native
land,
Firmly stand, firmly stand, my native
land,
Free in heart, and true in hand,
All that's lovely cherish;
Thus shall God remain thy friend,
Then shall heav'n thy walls defend!
Freedom! Freedom! Freedom shall not
perish!
Firmly stand, firmly stand,
Firmly stand, firmly stand, my native
land, my native land.
Safely dwell, safely dwell, my native
land,
Safely dwell, safely dwell, my native
land,
May thy sons united stand,
Firm and true forever;
God forbid the day should rise,
When 'tis said our freedom dies!
Freedom! Freedom! Freedom die? Oh
never!
Safely dwell, safely dwell,
Safely dwell, safely dwell, my native
land, my native land.
Sing for joy, sing for joy, my native
land,
Sing for joy, my native land,
In thee dwells a noble band,
All thy weal to cherish;
God with might will guard thee round,
While thy steps in truth are found.
Freedom! Freedom! Freedom shall not
perish!
Sing for joy, sing for joy,
Sing for joy, sing for joy, my native
land, my native land.